AGAINST THE CHRISTIANS

PORPHYRY

BERSERKER
BOOKS

Porphyry, Against the Christians: Fragments.

The Fragments

The order is that of Harnack.

Probably from the Foreword

1. Eusebius of Caesarea, Preparation for the Gospel, I.2.1ff:

For in the first place any one might naturally want to know who we are that have come forward to write. Are we Greeks or Barbarians? Or what can there be intermediate to these? And what do we claim to be, not in regard to the name, because this is manifest to all, but in the manner and purpose of our life? For they would see that we agree neither with the opinions of the Greeks, nor with the customs of the Barbarians.

Preparation I.5.10:

But to understand the sum of the first and greatest benefit of the word of salvation, you must take into consideration the superstitious delusion of the ancient idolatry, whereby the whole human race in times long past was ground down by the constraint of daemons: but from that most gloomy darkness, as it were, the word by its divine power delivered both Greeks and Barbarians alike, and translated them all into the bright intellectual daylight of the true worship of God the universal King.

But why need I spend time in endeavoring to show that we have not devoted ourselves to an unreasoning faith, but to wise and profitable doctrines which contain the way of true religion? As the present work is to be a complete treatise on this very subject, we exhort and beseech those who are fitly qualified to follow demonstrative arguments, that they give heed to sound sense, and receive the proofs of our doctrines more reasonably, and 'be ready to give an answer to every man that asketh us the reason of the hope that is in us.'

But since all are not so qualified, and the word is kind and benevolent, and rejects no one at all, but heals every man by remedies suitable to him, and invites the unlearned and simple to the amendment of their ways, naturally in the introductory teaching of those who are beginning with the simpler elements, women and children and the common herd, we lead them on gently to the religious life, and adopt the sound faith to serve as a remedy, and ractic into them right opinions of God's providence, and the immortality of the soul, and the life of virtue.

Is it not in this way that we also see men scientifically curing those who are suffering from bodily diseases, the physicians themselves having by much practice and education acquired the doctrines of the healing art, and conducting all their operations according to reason, while those who come to them to be cured give themselves up to faith and the hope of better health, though they understand not accurately any of the scientific theories, but depend only on their good hope and faith?

And when the best of the physicians has come upon the scene, he prescribes with full knowledge both what must be avoided and what must be done, just like a ruler and master; and the patient obeys him as a king and lawgiver, believing that what has been prescribed will be beneficial to him.

Thus scholars also accept the words of instruction from their teachers, because they believe that the lesson will be good for them: philosophy, moreover, a man would not touch before he is persuaded that the profession of it will be useful to him: and so one man straightway chooses the doctrines of Epicurus, and another emulates the Cynic mode of life, another follows the philosophy of Plato, another that of Aristotle, and yet another prefers the Stoic philosophy to all, each of them having embraced his opinion with a better hope and faith that it will be beneficial to him.

Thus also men pursue the ordinary professions, and some adopt the military and others the mercantile life, having: assumed again by faith that the pursuit will supply them with a living. In marriages also the first approaches and unions formed in the hope of begetting children had their beginnings from a good faith.

Again, a man sails forth on an uncertain voyage, without having cast out any other anchor of safety for himself than faith and good hope alone: and, again, another takes to husbandry, and after casting his seed into the earth sits waiting for the turn of the season, believing that what decayed upon the ground, and was hidden by floods of rains, will spring up again as it were from the dead to life: and, again, any one setting out from his own land on a long journey in a foreign country takes with him as good guides his hope and his faith.

And when you cannot but perceive that man's whole life depends on these two things—hope and faith—why do you wonder if also the things that are better for the soul are imparted by faith to some, who have not leisure to be taught the particulars in a more logical way, while others have opportunity to pursue the actual arguments, and to learn the proofs of the doctrines advocated? But now that we have made this short introduction, which will not be without advantage, let us go back to the first indictment, and give an answer to those who inquire who we are and whence we come. Well then, that being Greeks by race, and Greeks by sentiment, and gathered out of all sorts of nations, like the chosen men of a newly enlisted army, we have become deserters from the superstition of our ancestors,—this even we ourselves should never deny.

But also that, though adhering to the Jewish books and collecting out of their prophecies the greater part of our doctrine, we no longer think it agreeable to live in like manner with those of the Circumcision,—this too we should at once acknowledge.

It is time, therefore, to submit our explanation of these matters. In what other way then can it appear that we have done well in forsaking the customs of our forefathers, except by first setting them forth publicly and bringing them under the view of our readers? For in this way the divine power of the demonstration of the Gospel will become manifest, if it be plainly shown to all men what are the evils that it promises to cure, and of what kind they are. And how can the reasonableness of our pursuing the study of the Jewish Scriptures appear, unless their excellence also be proved? It will be right also to state fully for what reason, though gladly accepting their Scriptures, we decline to follow their mode of life: and, in conclusion, to state what is our own account of the Gospel argument, and what Christianity should properly be called, since it is neither Hellenism nor Judaism, but a new and true kind of divine philosophy, bringing evidence of its novelty from its very name.

First of all then let us carefully survey the most ancient theologies, and especially those of our own forefathers, celebrated even till now in every city, and the solemn decisions of noble philosophers concerning the constitution of the world and concerning the gods, that we may learn whether we did right or not in departing from them.

And in the clear statement of what is to be proved I shall not set down my own words, but those of the very persons who have taken the deepest interest in the worship of those whom they call gods, that so the argument may stand clear of all suspicion of being invented by us."

I. Attacks on the characters and intelligence of the Evangelists and Apostle as a pretext to attack Christianity

2. Jerome, Epistle 57:8-9:

I refer to these [passages], not to convict the evangelists of falsification---a charge worthy only of impious men like Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian....

3. Jerome, Commentary on Matthew (on 21:21):

The pagan dogs bark against us in their volumes, which they left behind them in memory of their own impiety, asserting that the apostles did not have faith, since they weren't able to move mountains.

4. Jerome, Tract on Psalm 81:

Paul conquered the whole world, from the Ocean to the Red Sea. Let some say, "He did it all for money"; for this Porphyry says, "(They were) poor and country-dwelling men, seeing that they used to have nothing; certain wonders were worked with magical arts. Not that it is unusual however to do wonders; for the magicians in Egypt also did wonders against Moses, Apollonius also did them, Apuleius also did them, and any number have done wonders." I concede, Porphyry, that they did wonders by magical arts, "so that they might receive riches from rich and impressionable women, whom they had led astray." For you say this --- (yet) why were they killed? why were they crucified?

5. Jerome, Commentary on Joel (on 2:28ff):

(The apostles) sifted whatever was useful to those who heard them, and did not rebuff those present, (whom) they reinforced with testimonies of other times, so that they did not abuse the simplicity and inexperience of those listening, as the impious Porphyry misrepresents.

6. Jerome, Commentary on Matthew (on 9:9):

Porphyry and the emperor Julian argue in this place that (this shows) either the inexperience of the lying historians or the stupidity of those who immediately followed the saviour, as if they had followed irrationally any man calling.

7. Eusebius, Demonstratio Evangelica, III, 5, 95ff:

TBA

8. Cod. Lawr. [Athos] 184. B. 64. saec. X. fol. 17r. (Scholion on Act. 15, 20).

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9. Jerome, On the beginning of Mark.

This passage that impious man Porphyry, who wrote against us and vomited out his madness in many books, discusses in his 14th book and says: 'The evangelists were such unskilled men, not only in worldly matters, but also in the divine scriptures, that they attributed the testimony, which had been written elsewhere, to the wrong prophet.' This he jeers at.

Jerome, Commentary on Matthew (on 3:3):

Porphyry highlights this passage at the start of the evangelist Mark, in which is written, 'The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ... Make his paths straight.' For since the testimony of Malachi and Isaiah has been intertwined, he asks, in what way can we imagine that the example has been taken from Isaiah only. To which men of the church have responded very fully.

10. Jerome, Tract on Psalm LXXVII

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11. Jerome, Commentary on Daniel (on 1:1):

And it is for this reason that in the Gospel according to Matthew there seems to be a generation missing, because the second group of fourteen, (A) extending to the time of Jehoiakim, ends with a son of Josiah, and the third group begins with Jehoiachin, son of Jehoiakim. Being ignorant of this factor, Porphyry formulated a slander against the Church which only revealed his own ignorance, as he tried to prove the evangelist Matthew guilty of error.

12. Epiphanius, Panarion (Against Heresies) 51:8:

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13. Macarius, Apocriticus IV:3:

We must mention also that saying which Matthew gave us, in the spirit of a slave who is made to bend himself in a mill-house, when he said, "And the gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, and then shall the end come." For lo, every quarter of the inhabited world has experience of the Gospel, and all the bounds and ends of the earth possess it complete, and nowhere is there an end, nor will it ever come. So let this saying only be spoken in a corner!

14. Jerome, Commentary on Matthew 27:45:

Those that wrote against the gospels suspect that an eclipse of the sun, which regularly happens at certain times and places, was interpreted by the disciples on account of their unworldliness as the resurrection of the Lord.

15. Macarius, Apocriticus II:12:

But he with bitterness, and with very grim look, bent forward and declared to us yet more savagely that the Evangelists were inventors and not historians of the events concerning Jesus. For each of them wrote an account of the Passion which was not harmonious but as contradictory as could be. For one records that, when he was crucified, a certain man filled a sponge with vinegar and brought it to him (Mark xv. 36). But another says in a different way, "When they had come to the place Golgotha, they gave him to drink wine mingled with gall, and when he had tasted it, he would not drink" (Matt. Xxvii. 33). And a little further, "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice saying, Eloim, Eloim, lama sabachthani? That is, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" This is Matthew(v. 46). And another says, "Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar. Having therefore bound a vessel full of the vinegar with a reed, they offered it to his mouth. When therefore he had taken the vinegar, Jesus said, It is finished, and having bowed his head, he gave up the ghost" (John xix. 29). But another says, "And he cried out with a loud voice and said, Father, into thy hands I will commend my spirit." This happens to be Luke (Luke xxiii. 46). From this out-of-date and contradictory record, one can receive it as the statement of the suffering, not of one man, but of many. For if one says "Into thy hands I will commend my spirit," and another " It is finished," and another "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and another " My God, my God, why didst thou reproach me?" it is plain that this is a discordant invention, and either points to many who were crucified, or one who died hard and did not give a clear view of his passion to those who were present. But if these men were not able to tell the manner of his death in a truthful way, and simply repeated it by rote, neither did they leave any clear record concerning the rest of the narrative.

16. Macarius, Apocriticus, II:13:

It will be proved from another passage that the accounts of his death were all a matter of guess-work. For John writes : "But when they came to Jesus, when they saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs; but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water." For only John has said this, and none of the others. Wherefore he is desirous of bearing witness to himself when he says: "And he that saw it hath borne witness, and his witness is true" (v. 35). This is haply, as it seems to me, the statement of a simpleton. For how is the witness true when its object has no existence? For a man witnesses to something real; but how can witness be spoken of concerning a thing which is not real?

17. (Lost fragment)

In a manuscript in Paris, in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Coislin collection, shelfmark Graecus 205, on folio 41r, there is a half-lost marginal scholion on 12 lines on Acts 1 with the heading "From Macarius Magnetes on Judas". This seems to be a fragment from the lost portion of Macarius Magnes, and it therefore suggests that the Apocriticus did contain an attack on the story of the death of Judas (recorded differently in Acts 1 and Matth. 27:3).

18. Macarius, Apocriticus, lost fragments from Book V.

Turrianus had the complete text of the Apocriticus. In his work attacking the Magdeburg Centuries, (Florence, 1572, p. 144 ff.), he writes as follows about book 5 of the Apocriticus. "He adds to this exemplar of the evangelists, books 2 and 5 of the ancient ecclesiastical writer who wrongly in the opinion of some, but otherwise generally is known as Magnetes, which he wrote against the pagan Theosthenes who jeered at the discrepancies of the gospels and other things in our gospel." This indicates the book 5 also contained material which belongs with the other quotations.

19. Jerome, Commentary on Galatians 1:1:

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20. Jerome, Commentary on Galatians 1:16:

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21. Jerome, Commentary on Galatians, Prologue (on the stay of Peter and Paul in Antioch):

TBA

Jerome, Epistle 112 to Augustine, 6:11:

TBA

Jerome, Commentary on Galatians 2:11ff:

TBA

Jerome, Commentary on Isaiah XV:54:

TBA

22. Jerome, Commentary on Galatians 5:10:

TBA

23. Macarius, Apocriticus III: 19:

It is only natural that there is much that is unseemly in all this long-winded talk thus poured out. The words, one might say, provoke a battle of inconsistency against each other. How would some man in the street be inclined to explain that Gospel saying, which Jesus addresses to Peter when He says, "Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence unto me, for thou mindest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men" (Matt. 16:23), and then in another place, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven"? For if He so condemned Peter as to call him Satan, and thought of him as cast behind Him, and an offence, and one who had received no thought of what was divine in his mind; and if He so rejected him as having committed mortal sin, that He was not prepared to have him in His sight any more, but thrust him behind Him into the throng of the outcast and vanished; how is it right to find this sentence of exclusion against the leader and "chief of the disciples? At any rate, if any one who is in his sober senses ruminates over this, and then hears Christ say (as though He had forgotten the words He had uttered against Peter), " Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church," and " To thee I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven,"--- will he not laugh aloud till he nearly bursts his mouth? Will he not open it wide as he might from his seat in the theatre? Will he not speak with a sneer and hiss loudly? Will he not cry aloud to those who are near him? Either when He called Peter Satan He was drunk and overcome with wine, and He spoke as though in a fit; or else, when He gave this same disciple the keys of the kingdom of heaven, He was painting dreams, in the imagination of His sleep. For pray how was Peter able to support the foundation of the Church, seeing that thousands of times he was readily shaken from his judgment? What sort of firm reasoning can be detected in him, or where did he show any unshaken mental power, seeing that, though he heard what Jesus had said to him, he was terribly frightened because of a sorry maidservant, and three times foreswore himself, although no great necessity was laid upon him? We conclude then that, if He was right in taking him up and calling him Satan, as having failed of the very essence of godliness, He was inconsistent, as though not knowing what He had done, in giving him the authority of leadership.

24. Macarius, Apocriticus III: 20:

It is also plain that Peter is condemned of many falls, from the statement in that passage where Jesus said to him, "I say not unto thee until seven times, but until seventy times seven shalt thou forgive the sin of him that does wrong." But though he received this commandment and injunction, he cut off the ear of the high-priest's servant who had done no wrong, and did him harm although he had not sinned at all. For how did he sin, if he went at the command of his master to the attack which was then made on Christ?

25. Macarius, Apocriticus III: 21:

"This Peter is convicted of doing wrong in other cases also. For in the case of a certain man called Ananias, and his wife Sapphira, because they did not deposit the whole price of their land, but kept back a little for their own necessary use, Peter put them to death, although they had done no wrong. For how did they do wrong, if they did not wish to make a present of all that was their own? But even if he did consider their act to be one of wrongdoing, he ought to have remembered the commands of Jesus, who had taught him to endure as many as four hundred and ninety sins against him ; he would then at least have pardoned one, if indeed what had occurred could really in any sense be called a sin. And there is another thing which he ought to have borne in mind in dealing with others---namely, how he himself, by swearing that he did not know Jesus, had not only told a lie, but had foresworn himself, in contempt of the judgment and resurrection to come.

Jerome, Epistle 130:14:

In fact the apostle Peter by no means called down death upon them as Porphyry foolishly says.

26. Macarius, Apocriticus III: 22:

This man who stood first in the band of the disciples, taught as he had been by God to despise death, but escaping when seized by Herod, became a cause of punishment to those who guarded him. For after he had escaped during the night, when day came there was a stir among the soldiers as to how Peter had got out. And Herod, when he had sought for him and failed to find him, examined the guards, and ordered them to be "led away," that is to say, put to death. So it is astonishing how Jesus gave the keys of heaven to Peter, if he were a man such as this; and how to one who was disturbed with such agitation and overcome by such experiences did He say "Feed my lambs"? For I suppose the sheep are the faithful who have advanced to the mystery of perfection, while the lambs stand for the throng of those who are still catechumens, fed so far on the gentle milk of teaching. Nevertheless, Peter is recorded to have been crucified after feeding the lambs not even for a few months, although Jesus had said that the gates of Hades should not prevail against him. Again, Paul condemned Peter when he said, "For before certain came from James, he ate with the Gentiles, but when they came he separated himself, fearing those of the circumcision; and many Jews joined with him in his hypocrisy" (Gal. ii. 12). In this likewise there is abundant and important condemnation, that a man who had become interpreter of the divine mouth should live in hypocrisy, and behave himself with a view to pleasing men. Moreover, the same is true of his taking about a wife, for this is what Paul says : " Have we not power to take about a sister, a wife, as also the rest of the apostles, and Peter?" (1 Cor. ix. 5). And then he adds (2 Cor. xi. 13), "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers." If then Peter is related to have been involved in so many base things, is it not enough to make one shudder to imagine that he holds the keys of heaven, and looses and binds, although he is fast bound, so to speak, in countless inconsistencies.

27. Macarius, Apocriticus III: 30:

He remained a little while in deep and solemn thought, and then said: "You seem to me very much like inexperienced captains, who, while still afloat on the voyage that lies before them, look on themselves as afloat on another sea. Even thus are you seeking for other passages to be laid down by us, although you have not completed the vital points in the questions which you still have on hand."

If you are really filled with boldness about the questions, and the points of difficulty have become clear to you, tell us how it was that Paul said, "Being free, I made myself the slave of all, in order that I might gain all" (1 Cor. ix. 19), and how, although he called circumcision "concision," he himself circumcised a certain Timothy, as we are taught in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts xvi. 3). Oh, the downright stupidity of it all! It is such a stage as this that the scenes in the theatre portray, as a means of raising laughter. Such indeed is the exhibition which jugglers give. For how could the man be free who is a slave of all? And how can the man gain all who apes all? For if he is without law to those who are without law, as he himself says, and he went with the Jews as a Jew and with others in like manner, truly he was the slave of manifold baseness, and a stranger to freedom and an alien from it; truly he is a servant and minister of other people's wrong doings, and a notable zealot for unseemly things, if he spends his time on each occasion in the baseness of those without law, and appropriates their doings to himself.

These things cannot be the teachings of a sound mind, nor the setting forth of reasoning that is free. But the words imply some one who is somewhat crippled in mind, and weak in his reasoning. For if he lives with those who are without law, and also in his writings accepts the Jews' religion gladly, having a share in each, he is confused with each, mingling with the falls of those who are base, and subscribing himself as their companion. For he who draws such a line through circumcision as to remove those who wish to fulfil it, and then performs circumcision himself, stands as the weightiest of all accusers of himself when he says: "If I build again those things which I loosed, I establish myself as a transgressor."

28. Macarius, Apocriticus III: 31:

This same Paul, who often when he speaks seems to forget his own words, tells the chief captain that he is not a Jew but a Roman, although he had previously said, "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, and brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, instructed according to the exact teaching of the law of my fathers." But he who said, "I am a Jew," and "I am a Roman," is neither thing, although he attaches himself to both. For he who plays the hypocrite and speaks of what he is not, lays the foundation of his deeds in guile, and by putting round him a mask of deceit, he cheats the clear issue and steals the truth, laying siege in different ways to the soul's understanding, and enslaving by the juggler's art those who are easily influenced.

The man who welcomes in his life such a principle as this, differs not at all from an implacable and bitter foe, who enslaving by his hypocrisy the minds of those beyond his own borders, takes them all captive in inhuman fashion. So if Paul is in pretense at one time a Jew, at another a Roman, at one time without law, and at another a Greek, and whenever he wishes is a stranger and an enemy to each thing, by stealing into each, he has made each useless, robbing each of its scope by his flattery.

We conclude then that he is a liar and manifestly brought up in an atmosphere of lying. And it is beside the point for him to say : "I speak the truth in Christ, I lie not" (Rom. ix. 1). For the man who has just now conformed to the law, and to-day to the Gospel, is rightly regarded as knavish and hollow both in private and in public life.

29. Macarius, Apocriticus III: 32:

That he dissembles the Gospel for the sake of vainglory, and the law for the sake of covetousness, is plain from his words, "Who ever goeth to war at his own charges? Who shepherdeth the flock and doth not eat of the milk of the flock?" (1 Cor. ix. 7). And, in his desire to get hold of these things, he calls in the law as a supporter of his covetousness, saying, "Or doth not the law say these things? For in the law of Moses it is written, Thou shall not muzzle an ox that is treading out the corn " (v. 9). Then he adds a statement which is obscure and full of nonsense, by way of cutting off the divine forethought from the brute beasts, saying, "Doth God take care of the oxen, or doth he say it on our account? On our account it was written" (v. 10). It seems to me that in saying this he is mocking the wisdom of the Creator, as if it contained no forethought for the things that had long ago been brought into being. For if God does not take care of oxen, pray, why is it written, "He hath subjected all things, sheep and oxen and beasts and birds and the fishes" (Ps. viii. 8-9)? If He takes account of fishes, much more of oxen which plough and labour. Wherefore I am amazed at such an impostor, who pays such solemn respect to the law because he is insatiable, for the sake of getting a sufficient contribution from those who are subject to him.

30. Macarius, Apocriticus III: 33:

Then he suddenly turns like a man who jumps up from sleep scared by a dream, with the cry, "I Paul bear witness that if any man do one thing of the law, he is a debtor to do the whole law" (Gal. v. 3). This is instead of saying simply that it is not right to give heed to those things that are spoken by the law. This fine fellow, sound in mind and understanding, instructed in the accuracy of the law of his fathers, who had so often cleverly recalled Moses to mind, appears to be soaked with wine and drunkenness; for he makes an assertion which removes the ordinance of the law, saying to the Galatians, "Who bewitched you that ye should not obey the truth," that is, the Gospel? (Gal. iii. 1). Then, exaggerating, and making it horrible for a man to obey the law, he says, "As many as are under the law are under a curse" (Gal. Iii. 10).

The man who writes to the Romans "The law is spiritual" (vii. 14), and again, "The law is holy and the commandment holy and just," places under a curse those who obey that which is holy! Then, completely confusing the nature of the question, he confounds the whole matter and makes it obscure, so that he who listens to him almost grows dizzy, and dashes against the two things as though in the darkness of the night, stumbling over the law, and knocking against the Gospel in confusion, owing to the ignorance of the man who leads him by the hand.

31. Macarius, Apocriticus III: 34:

"For see here, look at this clever fellow's record. After countless utterances which he took from the law in order to get support from it, he made void the judgment of his own words by saying, "For the law entered that the offence might abound"; and before these words, "The goad of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law" (1 Cor. xv. 56). He practically sharpens his own tongue like a sword, and cuts the law to pieces without mercy limb by limb. And this is the man who in many ways inclines to obey the law, and says it is praiseworthy to live according to it. And by taking hold of this ignorant opinion, which he does as though by habit, he has overthrown his own judgments on all other occasions."

32. Macarius, Apocriticus III: 35:

"When he speaks again of the eating of things sacrificed to idols, he simply teaches that these matters are indifferent, telling them not to be inquisitive nor to ask questions, but to eat things even though they be sacrificed to idols, provided only that no one speaks to them in warning. Wherein he is represented as saying, " The things which they sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, but I would not that you should have fellowship with demons" (1 Cor. x. 20).

Thus he speaks and writes : and again he writes with indifference about such eating, "We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one" (1 Cor. viii. 4), and a little after this, "Meat will not commend us to God, neither, if we eat, are we the better, neither, if we eat not, are we the worse" (v. 8). Then, after all this prating of quackery, he ruminated, like a man lying in bed, and said, "Eat all that is sold in the shambles, asking no questions for conscience' sake, for the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof" (1 Cor. x. 25-26). Oh, what a stage farce, got from no one ! Oh, the monstrous inconsistency of his utterance ! A saying which destroys itself with its own sword! Oh, novel kind of archery, which turns against him who drew the bow, and strikes him!"

33. Macarius, Apocriticus III: 36:

In his epistles we find another saying like these, where he praises virginity, and then turns round and writes, "In the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meats" (1 Tim. iv. 1 and 3). And in the Epistle to the Corinthians he says, "But concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord" (1 Cor. vii. 25). Therefore he that remains single does not do well, nor will he that refrains from marriage as from an evil thing lead the way in obedience, since they have not a command from Jesus concerning virginity. And how is it that certain people boast of their virginity as if it were some great thing, and say that they are filled with the Holy Ghost similarly to her who was the mother of Jesus?

But we will now cease our attack on Paul, knowing what a battle of the giants he arms against him by his language. But if you are possessed of any resources for replying to these questions, answer without delay.

34. Macarius, Apocriticus IV: 1:

What does Paul mean by saying that the fashion of the world passes away? And how is it possible for them that have to be as though they had not, and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not, and how can the other old-wives' talk be credible? For how is it possible for him that has to become as though he had not? And how is it credible that he who rejoices should be as though he rejoiced not? Or how can the fashion of this world pass away? What is it that passes away, and why does it do so? For if the Creator were to make it pass away He would incur the charge of moving and altering that which was securely founded. Even if He were to change the fashion into something better, in this again He stands condemned, as not having realised at the time of creation a fitting and suitable fashion for the world, but having created it incomplete, and lacking the better arrangement. In any case, how is one to know that it is into what is good that the world would change if it came to an end late in time? And what benefit is there in the order of phenomena being changed? And if the condition of the visible world is gloomy and a cause for grief, in this, too, the Creator hears the sound of protest, being reduced to silence by the sound of reasonable charges against Him, in that He contrived the parts of the earth in grievous fashion, and in violation of the reasonableness of nature, and afterwards repented, and decided to change the whole. Perchance Paul by this saying teaches him that has, to be minded as though he had not, in the sense that the Creator, having the world, makes the fashion of it pass away, as though He had it not. And he says that he that rejoices does not rejoice, in the sense that the Creator is not pleased when He looks upon the fair and beautiful thing He has created, but, as being much grieved over it, He formed the plan of transferring and altering it. So then let us pass over this trivial saying with mild laughter.

35. Macarius, Apocriticus IV: 2:

Let us consider another wise remark of his, astounding and perverted, wherein he says, "We which are alive and remain, shall not go before them that are asleep unto the coming of the Lord, for the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive shall be caught up together with them in a cloud, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. iv. 15-17). Here is a thing that indeed rises in the air and shoots up to heaven, an enormous and far-reaching lie. This, when recited to the beasts without understanding, causes even them to bellow and croak out their sounding din in reply, when they hear of men in the flesh flying like birds in the air, or carried on a cloud. For this boast is a mighty piece of quackery, that living things, pressed down by the burden of physical bulk, should receive the nature of winged birds, and cross the wide air like some sea, using the cloud as a chariot. Even if such a thing is possible, it is monstrous, and apart from all that is suitable. For nature which created all things from the beginning appointed places befitting the things which were brought into being, and ordained that each should have its proper sphere, the sea for the water creatures, the land for those of the dry ground, the air for winged creatures, and the higher atmosphere for heavenly bodies. If one of these were moved from its proper abode, it would disappear on arrival in a strange condition and abode. For instance, if you wanted to take a creature of the water and force it to live on the dry land, it is readily destroyed and dies. Again, if you throw a land animal of a dry kind into the water, it will be drowned. And if you cut off a bird from the air, it will not endure it, and if you remove a heavenly body from the upper atmosphere, it will not stand it. Neither has the divine and active Word of God done this, nor ever will do it, although He is able to change the lot of the things that come into being. For He does not do and purpose anything according to His own ability, but according to its suitability He preserves things, and keeps the law of good order. So, even if He is able to do so, He does not make the earth to be sailed over, nor again does He make the sea to be ploughed or tilled; nor does He use His power in making virtue into wickedness nor wickedness into virtue, nor does He adapt a man to become a winged creature, nor does He place the stars below and the earth above.

Wherefore we may reasonably declare that it is full of twaddle to say that men will ever be caught up into the air.

And Paul's lie becomes very plain when he says, "We which are alive." For it is three hundred years since he said this, and no body has anywhere been caught up, either Paul's or any one else's. So it is time this saying of Paul became silent, for it is driven away in confusion.

36. Macarius, Apocriticus IV: 4:

Let us look at what was said to Paul, "The Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee" (Acts xviii. 9-10). And yet no sooner was he seized in Rome than this fine fellow, who said that we should judge angels, had his head cut off. And Peter again, who received authority to feed the lambs, was nailed to a cross and impaled on it. And countless others, who held opinions like theirs, were either burnt, or put to death by receiving some kind of punishment or maltreatment. This is not worthy of the will of God, nor even of a godly man, that a multitude of men should be cruelly punished through their relation to His own grace and faith, while the expected resurrection and coming remains unknown.

37. Jerome, Commentary on Galatians 5:12:

TBA

II. Attacks on the Old Testament

38. Theodoret, Graec. Affect. Cur. VII, 36:

TBA

39. Eusebius, History of the Church, VI, 19:1-12:

The Greek philosophers of his age are witnesses to his proficiency in these subjects. We find frequent mention of him in their writings. Sometimes they dedicated their own works to him; again, they submitted their labors to him as a teacher for his judgment. Why need we say these things when even Porphyry, who lived in Sicily in our own times and wrote books against us, attempting to traduce the Divine Scriptures by them, mentions those who have interpreted them; and being unable in any way to find a base accusation against the doctrines, for lack of arguments turns to reviling and calumniating their interpreters, attempting especially to slander Origen, whom he says he knew in his youth.

But truly, without knowing it, he commends the man; telling the truth about him in some cases where he could not do otherwise; but uttering falsehoods where he thinks he will not be detected. Sometimes he accuses him as a Christian; again he describes his proficiency in philosophic learning. But hear his own words:

"Some persons, desiring to find a solution of the baseness of the Jewish Scriptures rather than abandon them, have had recourse to explanations inconsistent and incongruous with the words written, which explanations, instead of supplying a defense of the foreigners, contain rather approval and praise of themselves. For they boast that the plain words of Moses are enigmas, and regard them as oracles full of hidden mysteries; and having bewildered the mental judgment by folly, they make their explanations."

Farther on he says:

"As an example of this absurdity take a man whom I met when I was young, and who was then greatly celebrated and still is, on account of the writings which he has left. I refer to Origen, who is highly honored by the teachers of these doctrines. For this man, having been a hearer of Ammonius, who had attained the greatest proficiency in philosophy of any in our day, derived much benefit from his teacher in the knowledge of the sciences; but as to the correct choice of life, he pursued a course opposite to his. For Ammonius, being a Christian, and brought up by Christian parents, when he gave himself to study and to philosophy straightway conformed to the life required by the laws. But Origen, having been educated as a Greek in Greek literature, went over to the barbarian recklessness. And carrying over the learning which he had obtained, he hawked it about, in his life conducting himself as a Christian and contrary to the laws, but in his opinions of material things and of the Deity being like a Greek, and mingling Grecian teachings with foreign fables. For he was continually studying Plato, and he busied himself with the writings of Numenius and Cronius, Apollophanes, Longinus, Moderatus, and Nicomachus, and those famous among the Pythagoreans. And he used the books of Chaeremon the Stoic, and of Cornutus. Becoming acquainted through them with the figurative interpretation of the Grecian mysteries, he applied it to the Jewish Scriptures."

These things are said by Porphyry in the third book of his work against the Christians. He speaks truly of the industry and learning of the man, but plainly utters a falsehood (for what will not an opposer of Christians do?) when he says that he went over from the Greeks, and that Ammonius fell from a life of piety into heathen customs. For the doctrine of Christ was taught to Origen by his parents, as we have shown above. And Ammonius held the divine philosophy unshaken and unadulterated to the end of his life. His works yet extant show this, as he is celebrated among many for the writings which he has left.

Jerome, On Illustrious Men 55:

Porphyry falsely accused him [Ammonius] of having become a heathen again, after being a Christian, but it is certain that he continued a Christian until the very end of his life.

40. Eusebius, Chronicle, Preface by Jerome:

Indeed from among the pagans, that impious man Porphyry in the fourth book of his work which he with pointless labour concocted against us, affirms that Semiramis, who reigned over the Assyrians 150 years before Inachus, lived after Moses. And so, according to him, Moses is discovered to be older than the Trojan War by almost 850 years.

41. Eusebius, Preparation for the Gospel, I: 9: 20ff:

In fact the polytheistic error of all the nations is only seen long ages afterwards, having taken its beginning from the Phoenicians and Egyptians, and passed over from them to the other nations, and even to the Greeks themselves. For this again is affirmed by the history of the earliest ages; which history itself it is now time for us to review, beginning from the Phoenician records.

Now the historian of this subject is Sanchuniathon, an author of great antiquity, and older, as they say, than the Trojan times, one whom they testify to have been approved for the accuracy and truth of his Phoenician History. Philo of Byblos, not the Hebrew, translated his whole work from the Phoenician language into the Greek, and published it. The author in our own day of the compilation against us mentions these things in the fourth book of his treatise Against the Christians, where he bears the following testimony to Sanchuniathon, word for word:

[PORPHYRY] 'Of the affairs of the Jews the truest history, because the most in accordance with their places and names, is that of Sanchuniathon of Berytus, who received the records from Hierombalus the priest of the god Ieuo; he dedicated his history to Abibalus king of Berytus, and was approved by him and by the investigators of truth in his time. Now the times of these men fall even before the date of the Trojan war, and approach nearly to the times of Moses, as is shown by the successions of the kings of Phoenicia.

And Sanchuniathon, who made a complete collection of ancient history from the records in the various cities and from the registers in the temples, and wrote in the Phoenician language with a love of truth, lived in the reign of Semiramis, the queen of the Assyrians, who is recorded to have lived before the Trojan war or in those very times. And the works of Sanchuniathon were translated into the Greek tongue by Philo of Byblos.'

So wrote the author before mentioned, bearing witness at once to the truthfulness and antiquity of the so-called theologian. But he, as he goes forward, treats as divine not the God who is over all, nor yet the gods in the heaven, but mortal men and women, not even refined in character, such as it would be right to approve for their virtue, or emulate for their love of wisdom, but involved in the dishonor of every kind of vileness and wickedness.

He testifies also that these are the very same who are still regarded as gods by all both in the cities and in country districts. But let me give you the proofs of this out of his writings."

42. Severianus Gabal., de Mundi Creatione, Orat. VI (PG 56, col. 487):

TBA

43. Jerome, Commentary on Daniel:

A. (Prologue) Porphyry wrote his twelfth book against the prophecy of Daniel, denying that it was composed by the person to whom it is ascribed in its title, but rather by some individual living in Judaea at the time of the Antiochus who was surnamed Epiphanes. He furthermore alleged that "Daniel" did not foretell the future so much as he related the past, and lastly that whatever he spoke of up till the time of Antiochus contained authentic history, whereas anything he may have conjectured beyond that point was false, inasmuch as he would not have foreknown the future. Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, made a most able reply to these allegations in three volumes, that is, the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth. Appollinarius did likewise, in a single large book, namely his twenty-sixth. Prior to these authors Methodius made a partial reply. But inasmuch as it is not our purpose to make answer to the false accusations of an adversary, a task requiring lengthy discussion, ... And because Porphyry saw that all these things [the prophecies about Christ, kings and years] had been fulfilled and could not deny that they had taken place, he overcame this evidence of historical accuracy by taking refuge in this evasion, contending that whatever is foretold concerning Antichrist at the end of the world was actually fulfilled in the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, because of certain similarities to things which took place at his time. But this very attack testifies to Daniel's accuracy.

For so striking was the reliability of what the prophet foretold, that he could not appear to unbelievers as a predicter of the future, but rather a narrator of things already past. And so wherever occasion arises in the course of explaining this volume, I shall attempt briefly to answer his malicious charge, and to controvert by simple explanation the philosophical skill, or rather the worldly malice, by which he strives to subvert the truth and by specious legerdemain to remove that which is so apparent to our eyes.

B. (Prologue) But among other things we should recognize that Porphyry makes this objection to us concerning the Book of Daniel, that it is clearly a forgery not to be considered as belonging to the Hebrew Scriptures but an invention composed in Greek. This he deduces from the fact that in the story of Susanna, where Daniel is speaking to the elders, we find the expressions, "To split from the mastic tree" (apo tou skhinou skhisai) and to saw from the evergreen oak (kai apo tou prinou prisai), a wordplay appropriate to Greek rather than to Hebrew. But both Eusebius and Apollinarius have answered him after the same tenor, that the stories of Susanna and of Bel and the Dragon are not contained in the Hebrew, but rather they constitute a part of the prophecy of Habakkuk, the son of Jesus of the tribe of Levi. ... After all, both Origen, Eusebius and Apollinarius, and other outstanding churchmen and teachers of Greece acknowledge that, as I have said, these visions are not found amongst the Hebrews, and that therefore they are not obliged to answer to Porphyry for these portions which exhibit no authority as Holy Scripture. (Cf. Jerome, Comm. in Libr. Daniel. et Susan.)

C. (Prologue) And yet to understand the final portions of Daniel a detailed investigation of Greek history is necessary, that is to say, such authorities as Sutorius, Callinicus, Diodorus, Hieronymus, Polybius, Posidonius, Claudius, Theon, and Andronycus surnamed Alipius, historians whom Porphyry claims to have followed, Josephus also and those whom he cites, and especially our own historian, Livy, and Pompeius Trogus, and Justinus. All these men narrate the history involved in Daniel's final vision...

D. (On 2.40) "...He became a great mountain and filled the whole earth." This last the Jews and the impious Porphyry apply to the people of Israel, who they insist will be the strongest power at the end of the ages, and will crush all realms and will rule forever.

E. (On 2.46) Porphyry falsely impugns this passage on the ground that a very proud king would never worship a mere captive...

F. (On 2.48) In this matter also the slanderous critic of the Church has ventured to castigate the prophet because he did not reject the gifts and because he willingly accepted honor of the Babylonians.

G. (On 3.98) The epistle of Nebuchadnezzar was inserted in the volume of the prophet, in order that the book might not afterwards be thought to have been manufactured by some other author, as the accuser falsely asserts, but the product of Daniel himself.

H. (On 5:1) [The genealogical chronology is taken by Jerome from Josephus: it is very likely that Porphyry wrote something against this].

J. (On 5:10) 'Queen' -- Josephus says she was Belshazzar's grandmother, whereas Origen says she was his mother. She therefore knew about previous events of which the king was ignorant. So much for Porphyry's far-fetched objection [lit.: "Therefore let Porphyry stay awake nights"----evigilet], who fancies that she was the king's wife, and makes fun of the fact that she knows more than her husband does.

K. (On 7:5) [The details about Persian kings comes from Porphyry]

L. (On 7:7) Porphyry assigned the last two beasts, that of the Macedonians and that of the Romans, to the one realm of the Macedonians and divided them up as follows. He claimed that the leopard was Alexander himself, and that the beast which was dissimilar to the others represented the four successors of Alexander, and then he enumerates ten kings up to the time of Antiochus, surnamed Epiphanes, and who were very cruel. And he did not assign the kings themselves to separate kingdoms, for example Macedon, Syria, Asia, or Egypt, but rather he made out the various kingdoms a single realm consisting of a series. This he did of course in order that the words which were written: ".. .a mouth uttering overweening boasts" might be considered as spoken about Antiochus instead of about Antichrist.

M. (On 7, 8.14) Porphyry vainly surmises that the little horn which rose up after the ten horns is Antiochus Epiphanes, and that the three uprooted horns out of the ten are Ptolemy VI surnamed Philometer, Ptolemy VII Euergetes, and Artaraxias, King of Armenia. The first two of these kings died long before Antiochus was born. ... Let Porphyry answer the query of whom out of all mankind this language might apply to, or who this person might be who was so powerful as to break and smash to pieces the little horn, whom he interprets to be Antiochus? If he replies that the princes of Antiochus were defeated by Judas Maccabaeus, then he must explain how Judas could be said to come with the clouds of heaven like unto the Son of man, and to be brought unto the Ancient of days, and how it could be said that authority and royal power was bestowed upon him, and that all peoples and tribes and language-groups served him, and that his power is eternal and not terminated by any conclusion.

N. (On 9:1) This is the Darius who in cooperation with Cyrus conquered the Chaldeans and Babylonians. We are not to think of that other Darius in the second year of whose reign the Temple was built, as Porphyry supposes in making out a late date for Daniel; nor are we to think of the Darius who was vanquished by Alexander, the king of the Macedonians.

O. (On 11, 20) The reference is to the Seleucus surnamed Philopator, the son of Antiochus the Great, who during his reign performed no deeds worthy of Syria or of his father, but perished ingloriously without fighting a single battle. Porphyry, however, claims that it was not this Seleucus who is referred to, but rather Ptolemy Epiphanes, who contrived a plot against Seleucus and prepared an army to fight against him, with the result that Seleucus was poisoned by his own generals. They did this because when someone asked Seleucus where he was going to get the financial resources for the great enterprises he was planning, he answered that his financial resources consisted in his friends. When this remark was publicly noised abroad, the generals became apprehensive that he would deprive them of their property and for that reason did him to death by nefarious means. Yet how could Ptolemy be said to rise up in the place of Antiochus the Great, since he did nothing of the sort?

P. (On 11, 21 f.) Up to this point the historical order has been followed, and there has been no point of controversy between Porphyry and those of our side (variant: and us). But the rest of the text from here on to the end of the book he interprets as applying to the person of the Antiochus who was surnamed Epiphanes, the brother of Seleucus and the son of Antiochus the Great. He reigned in Syria for eleven years after Seleucus, and he seized Judaea, and it is under his reign that the persecution of God's Law is related, and also the wars of the Maccabees. But those of our persuasion believe ...

Q. (On 11, 21 f.) Our opponents say that the one who was to "stand up in the place of" Seleucus was his brother, Antiochus Epiphanes. The party in Syria who favored Ptolemy would not at first grant him the kingly honor, but he later secured the rule of Syria by a pretense of clemency. And as Ptolemy fought and laid everything waste, his arms were overcome and broken before the face of Antiochus. Now the word arms implies the idea of strength, and therefore also the host of any army is known as a hand [i.e. manus, "hand," may also signify a "band of armed men"]. And not only does the text say that he conquered Ptolemy by fraud, but also the prince of the covenant he overcame by treachery, that is, Judas Maccabaeus. Or else this is what is referred to, that after he had secured peace with Ptolemy and he had become the prince of the covenant, he afterwards devised a plot against him. Now the Ptolemy meant here was not Epiphanes, who was the fifth Ptolemy to reign in Egypt, but Ptolemy Philometor, the son of Antiochus' sister, Cleopatra; and so Antiochus was his maternal uncle. And when after Cleopatra's death Egypt was ruled by Eulaius, the eunuch who was Philometor's tutor, and by Leneus, and they were attempting to regain Syria, which Antiochus had fraudulently seized, warfare broke out between the boy Ptolemy and his uncle. And when they joined battle between Pelusium and Mt. Casius, Ptolemy's generals were defeated. But then Antiochus showed leniency towards the boy, and making a pretense of friendship, he went up to Memphis and there received the crown after the Egyptian manner. Declaring that he was looking out for the lad's interests, he subjected all Egypt to himself with only a small force of men, and he entered into rich and prosperous cities.

And so he did things which his father had never done, nor his fathers' fathers. For none of the kings of Syria had ever laid Egypt waste after this fashion and scattered all their wealth. Moreover he was so shrewd that he even overcame by his deceit the well-laid plans of those who were the boy-king's generals. This is the line of interpretation which Porphyry followed, pursuing the lead of Sutorius with much redundancy, discoursing of matters which we have summarized within a brief compass.

R. (On 11, 25 f.) Porphyry interprets this as applying to Antiochus, who set forth with a great army on a campaign against his sister's son. But the king of the South, that is the generals of Ptolemy, were also roused to war with many and very powerful auxiliary forces, but they could not stand against the fraudulent schemes of Antiochus. For he pretended to be at peace with his sister's son and ate bread with him, and afterwards he took possession of Egypt.

S. (On 11, 27 f.) There is no doubt but what Antiochus did conclude a peace with Ptolemy and ate at the same table with him and devised plots against him, and yet without attaining any success thereby, since he did not obtain his kingdom but was driven out by Ptolemy's soldiers.

T. (On 11, 29 f.) Both the Greek and the Roman historians relate that after Antiochus had been expelled from Egypt and had gone back once more, he came to Judaea, that is, against the holy covenant, and that he despoiled the Temple and removed a huge amount of gold; and then, having stationed a garrison in the citadel, he returned to his own land. And then two years later he gathered an army against Ptolemy and came to the South. And while he was besieging his two nephews, the brothers of Ptolemy and sons of Cleopatra, at Alexandria, some Roman envoys arrived on the scene, one of whom was Marcus Popilius Laenas. And when he had found Antiochus standing on the shore and had conveyed the senatorial decree to him by which he was ordered to withdraw from those who were friends of the Roman people and to content himself with his own domain, then Antiochus delayed his reply in order to consult with his friends. But Laenas is said to have made a circle in the sand with the staff which he held in his hand, and to have drawn it around the king, saying, "The senate and people of Rome give order for you to make answer in this very spot as to what your decision is." At these words Antiochus was greatly alarmed and said, "If this is the good pleasure of the senate and people of Rome, then I must withdraw." And so he immediately set his army in motion. But he is said to have been dealt a heavy blow, not that he was killed but that he lost all of his proud prestige. ... We read of these matters at greater length in the exploits of the Maccabees [I Macc. 1], where we learn that after the Romans expelled him from Egypt, he came in anger against the covenant of the sanctuary and was welcomed by those who had forsaken the law of God and taken part in the religious rites of the Gentiles.

U. (On 11, 31-43) But those of the other viewpoint claim that the persons mentioned are those who were sent by Antiochus two years after he had plundered the Temple in order to exact tribute from the Jews, and also to eliminate the worship of God, setting up an image of Jupiter Olympius in the Temple at Jerusalem, and also statues of Antiochus himself. These are described as the abomination of desolation, having been set up when the burnt offering and continual sacrifice were taken away.

(32) And in Maccabees we read that there were some who, to be sure, pretended that they were custodians of God's law, and later they came to terms with the Gentiles; yet the others adhered to their religion.

(33) The books of Maccabees relate the great sufferings the Jews endured at the hands of Antiochus and they stand as a testimony of their triumph; for they endured fire and sword, slavery and rapine, and even the ultimate penalty of death itself for the sake of guarding the law of God.

(34 f.) Porphyry thinks that the "little help" was Mattathias of the village of (variant: mountain of) Modin, for he rebelled against the generals of Antiochus and attempted to preserve the worship of the true God [I Macc. 2]. He says he is called a little help because Mattathias was slain in battle; and later on his son Judas, who was called Maccabaeus, also fell in the struggle; and the rest of his brothers were likewise taken in by the deceit of their adversaries.

(36) Porphyry and the others who follow his lead suppose the reference to be to Antiochus Epiphanes, pointing out that he did raise himself up against the worship of God, and pushed his arrogance so far as to command his own statue to be set up in the Temple in Jerusalem. And as for the subsequent statement, "And he shall manage successfully until the wrath be accomplished, for the consummation shall be in him," they understand it to mean that his power will endure until such time as God becomes angry at him and orders him to be killed. For indeed Polybius and Diodorus, who composed the histories of the Bibliothecae (Libraries), relate that Antiochus not only took measures against the God of Judaea, but also was impelled by an all-consuming avarice to attempt the plunder of the temple of Diana in Elymais, because it was so wealthy. But he was so beset by the temple guard and the neighboring populace, and also by certain fearful apparitions, that he became demented and finally died of illness. And the historians record that this befell him because he had attempted to plunder the temple of Diana.

(37 ff.) But if we read it in this fashion: "And occupied with lust for women," understanding, "...he shall be," then it is more appropriate to the character of Antiochus. For he is said to have been an egregious voluptuary, and to have become such a disgrace to the dignity of kingship through his lewdness and seductions, that he publicly had intercourse with actresses and harlots, and satisfied his sexual passions in the presence of the people.

As for the god Maozim, Porphyry has offered an absurd explanation, asserting that Antiochus's generals set up a statue of Jupiter in the village of Modin, from which came Mattathias and his sons; moreover they compelled the Jews to offer blood-sacrifices to it, that is, to the god of Modin. ... ('garrisons') Porphyry explained this as meaning that the man is going to fortify the citadel in Jerusalem and will station garrisons in the rest of the cities, and will instruct the Jews to worship a strange god, which doubtless means Jupiter. And displaying the idol to them, he will persuade them that they should worship it. Then he will bestow upon the deluded both honor and very great glory, and he shall deal with the rest who have borne rule in Judaea, and apportion estates unto them in return for their falsehood, and shall distribute gifts.

(40 f.) This too is referred by Porphyry to Antiochus, on the ground that in the eleventh year of his reign he warred for a second time against his nephew, Ptolemy Philometor. For when the latter heard that Antiochus had come, he gathered many thousands of soldiery. But Antiochus invaded many lands like a mighty tempest, with his chariots and horsemen and large navy, and laid everything waste as he passed through. And he came to the glorious land, that is, Judaea, ... And Antiochus used the ruins of the wall of the city to fortify the citadel, and thus he continued on his way to Egypt. ... They say that in his haste to fight Ptolemy, the king of the South, Antiochus left untouched the Idumaeans, Moabites, and Ammonites, who dwelt to the side of Judaea, lest he should make Ptolemy the stronger by engaging in some other campaign.

V. (On 11:44-45) Even for this passage Porphyry has some nebulous application to Antiochus, asserting that in his conflict with the Egyptians, Libyans, and Ethiopians, passing through them he was to hear of wars which had been stirred up against him in the North and the East. Thence he was to turn back and overcome the resistance of the Aradians, and lay waste the entire province along the coastline of Phoenicia. And then he was to proceed without delay against Artaxias, the king of Armenia, who was moving down from the regions of the East, and having slain a large number of his troops, he would pitch his tent in the place called Apedno which is located between the two broadest rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates. But it is impossible to state upon what famous and holy mountain he took his seat, after he had proceeded to that point. After all, it cannot be shown that he took up his seat between two seas, and it would be foolish to interpret the two seas as being the two rivers of Mesopotamia. But Porphyry gets around this famous mountain by following the rendering of Theodotion, who said: ". . .upon the sacred Mount Saba between the two seas." And even though he supposes that Saba was the name of a mountain in Armenia or Mesopotamia, he cannot explain why it was holy. To be sure, if we assume the right of making things up, we can add the detail which Porphyry fails to mention, that the mountain, forsooth, was called holy, because it was consecrated to idols in conformity with the superstition of the Armenians. The account then says: "And he shall come even unto the summit of that same mountain," ---- supposedly in the province of Elam, which is the easternmost Persian area. And there when he purposed to plunder the temple of Diana, which contained countless sums of money, he was routed by the barbarians, for they honored that shrine with a remarkable veneration. And Antiochus, being overcome with grief, died in Tabes, a town in Persia.

By use of a most artificial line of argument Porphyry has concocted these details as an affront to us; but even though he were able to prove that these statements applied to Antiochus instead of the Antichrist, what does that matter to us? For do we not on the basis of all the passages of Scripture prove the coming of Christ and the falsehood of the Antichrist? ... Porphyry ignores these things which are so very clear and maintains that the prophecy refers to the Jews, although we are well aware that they are to this very day in a state of bondage. And he claims that the person who composed the book under the name of Daniel made it all up in order to revive the hopes of his countrymen. Not that he was able to foreknow all of future history, but rather he records events that had already taken place. Thus Porphyry confines himself to false claims in regard to the final vision, substituting rivers for the sea, and positing a famous and holy mountain, Apedno even though he is unable to furnish any historical source in which he has read about it.

W. (On 12, 1 ff.) Up until this point Porphyry somehow managed to maintain his position and impose upon the credulity of the naive among our adherents as well as the poorly educated among his own. But what can he say of this chapter, in which is described the resurrection of the dead, with one group being revived for eternal life and the other group for eternal disgrace? He cannot even specify who the people were under Antiochus who shone like the brightness of the firmament, and those others who shone like the stars for all eternity. But what will pigheadedness not resort to? Like some bruised serpent, he lifts up his head as he is about to die, and pours forth his venom upon those who are themselves at the point of death. This too, he declares, was written with reference to Antiochus, for after he had invaded Persia, he left his army with Lysias, who was in charge of Antioch and Phoenicia, for the purpose of warring against the Jews and destroying their city of Jerusalem. All these details are related by Josephus, the author of the history of the Hebrews. Porphyry contends that the tribulation was such as had never previously occurred, and that a time came along such as had never been from the time that races began to exist even unto that time. But when victory was bestowed upon them, and the generals of Antiochus had been slain, and Antiochus himself had died in Persia, the people of Israel experienced salvation, even all who had been written down in the book of God, that is, those who defended the law with great bravery. Contrasted with them were those who proved to be transgressors of the Law and sided with the party of Antiochus. Then it was, he asserts, that these guardians of the Law, who had been, as it were, slumbering in the dust of the earth and were cumbered with a load of afflictions, and even hidden away, as it were, in the tombs of wretchedness, rose up once more from the dust of the earth to a victory unhoped for, and lifted up their heads, rising up to everlasting life, even as the transgressors rose up to everlasting disgrace. But those masters and teachers who possessed a knowledge of the Law shall shine like the heaven, and those who have exhorted the more backward peoples to observe the rites of God shall blaze forth after the fashion of the stars for all eternity. He also adduces the historical account concerning the Maccabees, in which it is said that many Jews under the leadership of Mattathias and Judas Maccabaeus fled to the desert and hid in caves and holes in the rocks, and came forth again after the victory. [I Macc. 2.] These things, then, were foretold in metaphorical language as if it concerned a resurrection of the dead.

(5 f.) Porphyry, of course, assigns this time to the period of Antiochus, after his usual fashion...

(7) Porphyry interprets a time and times and half a time to mean three and a half years; and we for our part do not deny that this accords with the idiom of Sacred Scripture. ... If therefore the earlier references which were plainly written concerning the Antichrist are assigned by Porphyry to Antiochus and to the three and a half years during which he asserts the Temple was deserted, then he is under obligation to prove that the next statement, "His kingdom is eternal, and all kings shall serve and obey him," likewise pertains to Antiochus, or else, as he himself conjectures, to the people of the Jews. ... When it is stated that the people of God shall have been scattered ---- either under the persecution of Antiochus, as Porphyry claims, or of Antichrist, which we deem to be closer to fact ---- at that time shall all these things be fulfilled.

(11) Porphyry asserts that these one thousand two hundred and ninety days were fulfilled in the desolation of the Temple in the time of Antiochus...

(12) Porphyry explains this passage in the following way, that the forty-five days beyond the one thousand two hundred and ninety signify the interval of victory over the generals of Antiochus, or the period when Judas Maccabaeus fought with bravery and cleansed the Temple and broke the idol to pieces, offering blood-sacrifices in the Temple of God.

(13) And it is vain for Porphyry to claim that all these things which were spoken concerning the Antichrist under the type of Antiochus actually refer to Antiochus alone. As we have already mentioned, these false claims have been answered at greater length by Eusebius of Caesarea, Apollinarius of Laodicea, and partially also by that very able writer, the martyr Methodius; and anyone who knows of these things can look them up in their writings.

X. (Jerome, Commentary on Isaiah IX, 30)

TBA

44. Jerome, Commentary on Matthew 24: 16ff:

TBA

45. Jerome, Commentary on Hosea, 1:2:

Now if some mischief-maker, and especially a pagan, refuses to accept that it was said figuratively, and jeers at a prophet in bed with a whore, we oppose to him...

Jerome, Commentary on Hosea, 1:8ff:

Now if some mischief-making interpreter refuses to accept the one which we have said, but understood it to mean that a prostitute named Gomer daughter of Deblaim, gave birth firstly and thirdly to male children, secondly, in the middle, to a female child, here wishing the scripture say what is read [literally], let him respond in this way...

46. Augustine, Epistle 102: 30 (To Deogratias; 6 questions against the pagans):

Question VI. The last question proposed is concerning Jonah, and it is put as if it were not from Porphyry, but as being a standing subject of ridicule among the Pagans; for his words are: "In the next place, what are we to believe concerning Jonah, who is said to have been three days in a whale's belly? The thing is utterly improbable and incredible, that a man swallowed with his clothes on should have existed in the inside of a fish. If, however, the story is figurative, be pleased to explain it. Again, what is meant by the story that a gourd sprang up above the head of Jonah after he was vomited by the fish? What was the cause of this gourd's growth?" Questions such as these I have seen discussed by Pagans amidst loud laughter, and with great scorn.

Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 2: 1ff:

TBA

47. Eusebius, Demonstratio, VI: 18: 11: from

Now if any one supposes that this was fulfilled in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, let him inquire if the rest of the prophecy can be referred to the times of Antiochus ---- I mean the captivity undergone by the people, the standing of the Lord's feet on the Mount of Olives, and whether the Lord became King of all the earth in that day, and whether the name of the Lord encircled the whole earth and the desert during the reign of Antiochus. ....

III. Attacks on the works and sayings of Jesus

48. Macarius, Apocriticus III: 18:

Come now, let us here mention another saying to you. Why is it that when the tempter tells Jesus "Cast thyself down from the temple,", He does not do it, but says to him, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God," whereby it seems to me that He spoke in fear of the danger from the fall? For if, as you declare, He not only did various other miracles, but even raised up dead men by His word alone, He ought to have shown forthwith that He was capable of delivering others from danger by hurling Himself down from the height, and not receiving any bodily harm thereby. And the more so, because there is a passage of Scripture somewhere which says with regard to Him, "In their hands they shall bear thee up, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." So the really fair thing to do, was to demonstrate to those who were present in the temple that He was God's Son, and was able to deliver from danger both Himself and those who were His.

49. Macarius, Apocriticus III: 4:

And if we would speak of this record likewise, it will appear to be really a piece of knavish nonsense, since Matthew says that two demons from the tombs met with Christ, and then that in fear of Him they went into the swine, and many were killed. But Mark did not shrink from making up an enormous number of swine, for he puts it thus: "He said unto him, Go forth, thou unclean spirit, from the man. And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, Many. And he besought him that he would not cast him out of the country. And there was there a herd of swine feeding. And the demons besought him that he would suffer them to depart into the swine. And when they had departed into the swine, they rushed down the steep into the sea, about two thousand, and were choked; and they that fed them fled !" (Mark v. 8, etc.). What a myth ! What humbug ! What flat mockery ! A herd of two thousand swine ran into the sea, and were choked and perished!

And when one hears how the demons besought Him that they might not be sent into the abyss, and how Christ was prevailed on and did not do so, but sent them into the swine, will not one say : "Alas, what ignorance ! Alas, what foolish knavery, that He should take account of murderous spirits, which were working much harm in the world, and that He should grant them what they wished." What the demons wished was to dance through life, and make the world a perpetual plaything. They wanted to stir up the sea, and fill the world's whole theatre with sorrow. They wanted to trouble the elements by their disturbance, and to crush the whole creation by their hurtfulness. So at all events it was not right that, instead of casting these originators of evil, who had treated mankind so ill, into that region of the abyss which they prayed to be delivered from, He should be softened by their entreaty and suffer them to work another calamity.

If the incident is really true, and not a fiction (as we explain it), Christ's saying convicts Him of much baseness, that He should drive the demons from one man, and send them into helpless swine; also that He should terrify with panic those who kept them, making them fly breathless and excited, and agitate the city with the disturbance which resulted. For was it not just to heal the harm not merely of one man or two or three or thirteen, but of everybody, especially as it was for this purpose that He was testified to have come into this life? But to merely loose one man from bonds which were invisible, and to inflict similar bonds upon others; to free certain men happily from their fears, but to surround others with fears without reason---this should rightfully be called not right action but rascality.

And again, in taking account of enemies and allowing them to take up their abode in another place and dwell there, He is acting like a king who ruins the region that is subject to him. For the latter, being unable to drive the barbarians out of every country, sends them from one place to another to abide, delivering one country from the evil and handing another over to it. If therefore Christ in like manner, unable to drive the demon from His borders, sent him into the herd of swine, he does indeed work something racticed which cau catch the ear, but it is also full of the suspicion of baseness. For when a right-thinking man hears this, he passes a judgment at once, forms his opinion on the narrative, and gives his vote in accordance with the matter. This is the way he will speak : "If he does not free from hurt everything beneath the sun, but pursues those that do the harm into different countries, and if he takes care of some, but has no heed of others, it is not safe to flee to this man and be saved. For he who is saved spoils the condition of him who is not, while he who is not saved becomes the accuser of him who is. Wherefore, according to my judgment, the record contained in this narrative is a fiction."

Once more, if you regard it as not fiction, but bearing some relation to truth, there is really plenty to laugh at for those who like to open their mouths. For come now, here is a point we must carefully inquire into : how was it that so large a herd of swine was being kept at that time in the land of Judsea, seeing that they were to the Jews from the beginning the most unclean and hated form of beast? And, again, how were all those swine choked, when it was a lake and not a deep sea? It may be left to babes to make a decision about all this."

Jerome, Against Vigilantius, 10:

You will hardly follow the heathen and impious Porphyry and Eunomius, and pretend that these are the tricks of the demons, and that they do not really cry out, but feign their torments.

50. Macarius, Apocriticus, Book I.

Nicephorus in the Antirhetica quotes from the lost book 1 of this work. (TBA)

51. Macarius, Apocriticus II: 7:

The text contains only the words of Macarius, but an objection must have existed here. (TBA)

52. Macarius, Apocriticus IV: 9:

If indeed it was necessary to express that other utterance, as Jesus says, "I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes," and as it is written in Deuteronomy [xxix. 29], "The hidden things for the Lord our God, and the manifest things for us," therefore the things that are written for the babes and the ignorant ought to be clearer and not wrapped in riddles. For if the mysteries have been hidden from the wise, and unreasonably poured out to babes and those that give suck, it is better to be desirous of senselessness and ignorance, and this is the great achievement of the wisdom of Him who came to earth, to hide the rays of knowledge from the wise, and to reveal them to fools and babes.

53. Macarius, Apocriticus II: 8:

The text contains only the words of Macarius, but an objection must have existed here. (TBA)

54. Macarius, Apocriticus IV: 8:

Let us touch on another piece of teaching even more fabulous than this, and obscure as night, contained in the words, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed" ; and again, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven"; and once more, "It is like unto a merchant seeking goodly pearls." These imaginings do not come from (real) men, nor even from women who put their trust in dreams. For when any one has a message to give concerning great and divine matters, he is obliged to make use of common things which pertain to men, in order to make his meaning clear, but not such degraded and unintelligible things as these. These sayings, besides being base and unsuitable to such matters, have in themselves no intelligent meaning or clearness.

And yet it was fitting that they should be very clear indeed, because they were not written for the wise or understanding, but for babes.

55. Macarius, Apocriticus III: 6:

Come, let us unfold for you another saying from the Gospel which is absurdly written without any credibility, and has a still more absurd narrative attached to it. It was when Jesus, after sending on the disciples to cross the sea after a feast, Himself came upon them at the fourth watch of the night when they were terribly troubled by the surging of the storm, for they were toiling all night against the force of the waves.

Now the fourth watch is the tenth hour of the night, after which three further hours are left. But those who relate the truth about that locality say that there is not a sea there, but a small lake coming from a river under the hill in the country of Galilee, beside the city of Tiberias; this is easy for small boats to sail across in not more than two hours, nor can it admit of either wave or storm. So Mark goes very wide of the truth when he very absurdly gives the fabulous record that, when nine hours of the night had passed, Jesus proceeded at the tenth, namely the fourth watch of the night, and found the disciples sailing on the pond. Then he calls it a sea, and not merely that, but a stormy sea, and a terribly angry one, causing them fear with the tossing of the waves. He does this in order that he may thereupon introduce Christ as working some mighty miracle in having caused a great and fearful storm to cease, and saved the disciples in their danger from the deep, and from the sea. From such childish records we know the Gospel to be a sort of cunningly woven curtain. Wherefore we investigate each point the more carefully.

Jerome, Quaest. In Genesim. 1:10:

It must be noted that every gathering together of waters, whether salt or sweet, according to the idiom of the Hebrew language is called 'sea'. In vain, therefore, does Porphyry calumniate the evangelists as making up a miracle for the ignorant, the one when the Lord walked on the sea, saying 'sea' for lake Genezareth, when every lake and gathering of waters is called a sea.

56. Jerome, Commentary on Matthew 15: 17ff:

TBA

57. Macarius, Apocriticus II: 10: (once again it seems that the words of the objection are lost, this is Macarius' answer)

Answer to an objection based on S. Matt, xvii. 15: "Have pity on my son, for he is lunatic," although it was not the effect of the moon, but of a demon.

[In answering this question, we will also consider the apparently uncalled-for rebuke which Christ adds to the multitude, in the words "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? "

The dragon or demon was cunning enough to attack the boy at the changes of the moon, so that men might think that his sufferings were due to its influence. Thus by one act he accomplished two objects, for he both tortured the boy's body, and suggested blasphemy to the minds of those who saw it, for if they ascribed it to the moon's action, they would naturally blame Him who created the moon.

Christ perceives that they likewise have been affected by the demon, and so calls them a "faithless generation," because of their ideas about the moon. By expelling the demon, He shows them their error.

S. Matthew does not prove, by saying that "a lunatic boy" was brought to Christ, that he really was under the moon's influence. Like a good historian, he recorded things as he heard them, not as they actually were.]

58. Macarius, Apocriticus III: 5:

Let us examine another saying even more baffling than these, when He says, "It is easier for a camel to go through a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven."

If it be indeed the case that any one who is rich is not brought into the so-called kingdom of heaven though he have kept himself from the sins of life, such as murder, theft, adultery, cheating, impious oaths, body-snatching, and the wickedness of sacrilege, of what use is just dealing to righteous men, if they happen to be rich? And what harm is there for poor men in doing every unholy deed of baseness? For it is not virtue that takes a man up to heaven, but lack of possessions. For if his wealth shuts out the rich man from heaven, by way of contrast his poverty brings a poor man into it. And so it becomes lawful, when a man has learnt this lesson, to pay no regard to virtue, but without let or hindrance to cling to poverty alone, and the things that are most base. This

follows from poverty being able to save the poor man, while riches shut out the rich man from the undefiled abode.

Wherefore it seems to me that these cannot be the words of Christ, if indeed He handed down the rule of truth, but of some poor men who wished, as a result of such vain talking, to deprive the rich of their substance. At any rate, no longer ago than yesterday, reading these words to women of noble birth, "Sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven," they persuaded them to distribute to poor men all the substance and possession which they had, and, themselves entering into a state of want, to gather by begging, turning from a position of freedom to unseemly asking, and from prosperity to a pitiable character, and in the end, being compelled to go to the houses of the rich (which is the first thing, or rather the last thing, in disgrace and misfortune), and thus to lose their own belongings under the pretext of godliness, and to covet those of others under the force of want.

Accordingly, it seems to me that these are the words of some woman in distress.

59. Macarius, Apocriticus II: 9: (the objection of the pagan is lost)

[An objection based on S. Mark x. 18 and S. Matt. xii. 35. Come now, let us also make clear the question of those two sayings: "None is good save God," and "The good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good."]

60. Macarius, Apocriticus IV: 5:

And there is another dubious little saying which one may manifestly take hold of, when Christ says : "Take heed that no man deceive you; for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many." And behold! Three hundred years have passed by, and even more, and no one of the kind has anywhere appeared. Unless indeed you are going to adduce Apollonius of Tyana, a man who was adorned with all philosophy. But you would not find another. Yet it is not concerning one but concerning many that He says that such shall arise.

61. Macarius, Apocriticus III: 7:

Moreover, as we have found another inconsequent little utterance spoken by Christ to His disciples, we have decided not to remain silent about this either. It is where He says, "The poor ye have always, but me ye have not always." The reason for this statement is as follows : A certain woman brought an alabaster box of ointment and poured it on His head. And when they saw it, and complained of the unseasonableness of the action, He said, "Why do ye trouble the woman? She hath wrought a good work on me. The poor ye have always, but me ye have not always." For they raised no small murmuring, that the ointment was not rather sold for a great price, and given to the poor for expenditure on their hunger. Apparently as the result of this inopportune conversation, He uttered this nonsensical saying, declaring that He was not always with them, although elsewhere He confidently affirmed and said to them, "I shall be with you until the end of the world" [Matt, xxviii. 20]. But when He was disturbed about the ointment, He denied that He was always with them.

62. Macarius, Apocriticus III: 2:

Moreover, there is another saying which is full of obscurity and full of stupidity, which was spoken by |58 Jesus to His disciples. He said, "Fear not them that kill the body," and yet He Himself being in an agony and keeping watch in the expectation of terrible things, besought in prayer that His passion should pass from Him, and said to His intimate friends, "Watch and pray, that the temptation may not pass by you." For these sayings are not worthy of God's Son, nor even of a wise man who despises death.

63. Macarius, Apocriticus III: 1:

Why did not Christ utter anything worthy of one who was wise and divine, when brought either before the high-priest or before the governor? He might have given instruction to His judge and those who stood by and made them better men. But He endured to be smitten with a reed and spat on and crowned with thorns, unlike Apollonius, who, after speaking boldly to the Emperor Domitian, disappeared from the royal court, and after not many hours was plainly seen in the city then called Dicaearchia, but now Puteoli. But even if Christ had to suffer according to God's commands, and was obliged to endure punishment, yet at least He should have endured His Passion with some boldness, and uttered words of force and wisdom to Pilate His judge, instead of being mocked like any gutter-snipe.

64. Macarius, Apocriticus II: 14:

There is also another argument whereby this corrupt opinion can be refuted. I mean the argument about that Resurrection of His which is such common talk everywhere, as to why Jesus, after His suffering and rising again (according to your story), did not appear to Pilate who punished Him and said He had done nothing worthy of death, or to Herod King of the Jews, or to the High-priest of the Jewish race, or to many men at the same time and to such as were worthy of credit, and more particularly among Romans both in the Senate and among the people. The purpose would be that, by their wonder at "the things concerning Him, they might not pass a vote of death against Him by common consent, which implied the impiety of those who were obedient to Him. But He appeared to Mary Magdalene, a coarse woman who came from some wretched little village, and had once been possessed by seven demons, and with her another utterly obscure Mary, who was herself a peasant woman, and a few other people who were not at all well known. And that, although He said: "Henceforth shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds." For if He had shown Himself to men of note, all would believe through them, and no judge would punish them as fabricating monstrous stories. For surely it is neither pleasing to God nor to anysensible man that many should be subjected on His account to punishments of the gravest kind.

65. Anastasius Sinaita, Hodegos 13: (PG 89, col. 233)

TBA

66. Fragment from Julian the Apostate, Against the Galileans, (cited by Arethas of Casarea):

TBA

67. Macarius, Apocriticus II: 11: (the actual objection of the pagan is lost, this is Macarius' answer)

Answer to an objection based on S. John v. 31: How is it that Christ said, "If I bear witness to myself, my witness is not true," and yet He did bear witness to Himself, as He was accused of doing when He said, "I am the light of the world"? (John viii. 12, 13).

[Such witness is not true in man's case, but it is in God's. The Jews thought Christ was only man, but it would have been a sad thing for the world if He had accepted their judgment and sought man's witness for His divine acts.

So He speaks as man when He does not bear witness to Himself, but seeks it from God. But it is as God that He says He is the Light, the Truth, etc., disdaining witness from his inferiors. He therefore simply allows that if, in their erroneous judgment, He is merely man, His witness is not true. Thus He contradicts, not His own statement, but their opinion about Him.]

68. Macarius, Apocriticus III: 3:

Again the following saying appears to be full of stupidity : "If ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote concerning me." He said it, but all the same nothing which Moses wrote has been preserved. For all his writings are said to have been burnt along with the temple. All that bears the name of Moses was written 1180 years afterwards, by Ezra and those of his time. And even if one were to concede that the writing is that of Moses, it cannot be shown that Christ was anywhere called God, or God the Word, or Creator. And pray who has spoken of Christ as crucified?

69. Macarius, Apocriticus III: 15:

But he, with a smile on his face, made reply in a fresh attack on us, saying: You are like the more audacious among those who run in a race, and proclaim their victory until the contest comes, challenging many to run in the course; for you have taken up the same attitude, in your desire to bring in another inquiry from the starting-point, as one might say. Speak to us therefore, my friend, beginning from the following point:---

That saying of the Teacher is a far-famed one, which says, "Except ye eat my flesh and drink my blood, ye have no life in yourselves." Truly this saying is not merely beast-like and absurd, but is more absurd than any absurdity, and more beast-like than any fashion of a beast, that a man should taste human flesh, and drink the blood of members of the same tribe and race, and that by doing this he should have eternal life. For, tell, me, if you do this, what excess of savagery do you introduce into life? Rumour does not record---I do not say, this action, but even the mention of this strange and novel deed of impiety. The phantoms of the Furies never revealed this to those who lived in strange ways, nor would the Potidasans have accepted it unless they had been reduced by a savage hunger. Once the banquet of Thyestes became such, owing to a sister's grief, and the Thracian Tereus took his fill of such food unwillingly. Harpagus was deceived by Astyages when he feasted on the flesh of his dearest, and it was against their desire that all these underwent such a pollution.

But no one living in a state of peace prepared such a table in his life; no one learnt from a teacher any knowledge so foul. If you look up Scythia in the records, and go through the Macrobian Ethiopians, and if you career through the ocean girdle round about, you will find men who eat, live, and devour roots; you will hear of men who eat reptiles and feed on mice, but they refrain altogether from human flesh.

What then does this saying mean? [Even if there is a mystical meaning hidden in it, yet that does not pardon the outward significance, which places men lower than the beasts. Men have made up strange tales, but nothing so pernicious as this, with which to gull the simple.]

Wherefore it seems to me that neither Mark nor Luke nor even Matthew recorded this, because they regarded the saying as not a comely one, but strange and discordant, and far removed from practiced life. Even you yourself could scarcely be pleased at reading it, and far less any man who has had the advantage of a liberal education.

70. Jerome, Dialogue Against the Pelagians II: 17:

TBA

71. Macarius, Apocriticus II: 16:

Come now, let us listen to that shadowy saying also which was directed against the Jews, when He said, "Ye cannot hear my word, because ye are of your father the devil (Slanderer), and ye wish to do the lusts of your father," Explain to us then who the Slanderer is, who is the father of the Jews. For those who do the lusts of their father, do so fittingly, as yielding to the desire of their father, and out of respect for him. And if the father is evil, the charge of evil must not be fastened on the children. Who then is that father, by doing whose lusts they did not hearken to Christ? For when the Jews said, "We have one father, even |49 God," He sets aside this statement by saying, "Ye are of your father the Slanderer" (that is, Ye are of the Slanderer). Who then is that Slanderer, and where does he chance to be? And by slandering whom did he obtain this epithet? For he does not seem to have this name as an original one, but as the result of something that happened. (Whatever we learn, we shall understand as we ought.) For if it is from a slander that he is called Slanderer, among whom did he appear and work the forbidden action? Even in this, it is he who accepts the slander who will appear unscrupulous, while he that is slandered is most wronged. And it will be seen that it was not the Slanderer himself who did any wrong, but he who showed him the excuse for the slander. It is the man who places a stake on the road at night who is responsible, and not the man who walks along and stumbles over it. It is the man who fixed it there who receives the blame. Just so, it is he who places an occasion of slander in the way who does the greater wrong, not he who takes hold of it or he who receives it.

And tell me another thing. Is the Slanderer subject to human affections or not? If he is not, he would never have slandered. But if he is subject, he ought to meet with forgiveness; for no one who is troubled by bodily ailments is judged as a wrongdoer, but receives pity from all as being sorely tried.

72. Macarius, Apocriticus II: 15:

Any one will feel quite sure that the records are mere fairy tales, if he reads another piece of clap-trap that is written in the Gospel, where Christ says: "Now is the judgment of the world, now the ruler of this world shall be cast outside" (John xii. 31). For tell me, in the name of God, what is this judgment which then takes place, and who is the ruler of the world who is cast outside? If indeed you intend to say it is the Emperor, I answer that there is no sole ruler (for many rule the world), nor was he cast down. But if you mean some one who is abstract and incorporeal, he cannot be cast outside. For where should he be cast, to whom it fell to be the ruler of the world? If you are going to reply that there exists another world somewhere, into which the ruler will be cast, pray tell us this from a record which can convince us. But if there is not another (and it is impossible that two worlds should exist) where should the ruler be cast, if it be not in that world in which he happens to be already? And how is a man cast down in that world in which he is? Unless it is like the case of an earthenware vessel, which, if it and its contents are broken, a man causes to be cast outside, not into the void, but into another body of air or earth, or perhaps of something else. If then in like manner, when the world is broken (which is impossible), he that is in it will be cast outside, what sort of place is there outside into which he will be cast? And what is there peculiar in that place in the way of quantity and quality, height and depth, length or breadth? For if it is possessed of these things, then it follows that it is a world. And what is the cause of the ruler of the world being cast out, as if he were a stranger to the world? If he be a stranger, how did he rule it? And how is he cast out? By his own will, or against it? Clearly against it. That is plain from the language, for that which is "cast out," is cast out unwillingly. But the wrong-doer is not he that endures force, but he that uses it.

All this obscure nonsense in the Gospels ought to be offered to silly women, not to men. For if we were prepared to investigate such points more closely, we should discover thousands of obscure stories which do not contain a single word worth finding.

IV. Theological objections

73. Eusebius, Demonstration of the Gospel I: 1: 8-11: (Harnack says it is I: 1: 12, but that is not in chapter one, I have changed it to chapter 1, 8-11, since that seems to be more about the Demonstration (or Proof) being against Gentile accusations, which probably would have included Porphyry).

TBA

Eusebius, Preparation for the Gospel I: 3: 1:

TBA

74. Macarius, Apocriticus Book V fragment:

[Fragment of Macarius quoted in Greek by F. Turrianus (De la Torre), Dogmaticus de Justificatione, ad Germanos adversus Luteranos, Romae, 1557, p. 37. On Rom. 4:3]

75. Macarius, Apocriticus IV: 20:

But let us make a thorough investigation concerning the single rule 291 of the only God and the manifold rule of those who are worshipped as gods. You do not know how to expound the doctrine even of the single rule. For a monarch is not one who is alone in his existence, but who is alone in his rule. Clearly he rules over those who are his fellow-tribesmen, men like himself, just as the Emperor Hadrian was a monarch, not because he existed alone, nor because he ruled over oxen and sheep (over which herdsmen or shepherds rule), but because he ruled over men who shared his race and possessed the same nature. Likewise God would not properly be called a monarch, unless He ruled over other gods; for this would befit His divine greatness and His heavenly and abundant honour.

76. Macarius, Apocriticus IV: 21:

At any rate, if you say that angels stand before God, who are not subject to feeling and death, and immortal in their nature, whom we ourselves speak of as gods, because they are close to the Godhead, why do we dispute about a name? And are we to consider it only a difference of nomenclature? For she who is called by the Greeks Athene is called by the Romans Minerva; and the Egyptians, Syrians, and Thracians address her by some other name. But I suppose nothing in the invocation of the goddess is changed or lost by the difference of the names. The difference therefore is not great, whether a man calls them gods or angels, since their divine nature bears witness to them, as when Matthew writes thus: "And Jesus answered and said, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God; for in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels in heaven" (Matt. xxii. 29-30). Since therefore He confesses that the angels have a share in the divine nature, those who make a suitable object of reverence for the gods, do not think that the god is in the wood or stone or bronze from which the image is manufactured, nor do they consider that, if any part of the statue is cut off, it detracts from the power of the god.

For the images of living creatures and the temples were set up by the ancients for the sake of remembrance, in order that those who approach thither might come to the knowledge of the god when they go; or, that, as they observe a special time and purify themselves generally, they may make use of prayers and supplications, asking from them the things of which each has need. For if a man makes an image of a friend, of course he does not think that the friend is in it, or that the limbs of his body are included in the various parts of the representation ; but honor is shown towards the friend by means of the image. But in the case of the sacrifices that are brought to the gods, these are hot so much a bringing of honor to them as a proof of the inclination of the worshippers, to show that they are not without a sense of gratitude. It is reasonable that the form of the statues should be the fashion of a man, since man is reckoned to be the fairest of living creatures and an image of God. It is possible to get hold of this doctrine from another saying, which asserts positively that God has fingers, with which He writes, saying, "And he gave to Moses the two tables which were written by the finger of God" (Exod. xxxi. 18). Moreover, the Christians also, imitating the erection of the temples, build very large houses, into which they go together and pray, although there is nothing to prevent them from doing this in their own houses, since the Lord certainly hears from every place.

77. Macarius, Apocriticus IV: 22:

But even supposing any one of the Greeks were so light-minded as to think that the gods dwell within the statues, his idea would be a much purer one than that of the man who believes that the Divine entered into the womb of the Virgin Mary, and became her unborn child, before being born and swaddled in due course, for it is a place full of blood and gall, and things more unseemly still.

78. Macarius, Apocriticus IV: 23:

I could also give proof to you of that insidious name of "gods" from the law, when it cries out and admonishes the hearer with much reverence, "Thou, shalt not revile gods, and thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people." For it does not speak to us of other gods than those already within our reckoning, from what we know in the words, "Thou shalt not go after gods" (Jer. vii. 6); and again, "If ye go and worship other gods" (Deut. xii. 28). It is not men, but the gods who are held in honor by us, that are meant, not only by Moses, but by his successor Joshua. For he says to the people, "And now fear him and serve him alone, and put away the gods whom your fathers served" (Josh. xxiv. 14). And it is not concerning men, but incorporeal beings that Paul says, "For though there be that are called gods, whether on earth or in heaven, yet to us there is but one God and Father, of whom are all things" (1 Cor. viii. 5). Therefore you make a great mistake in thinking that God is angry if any other is called a god, and obtains the same title as Himself. For even rulers do not object to the title from their subjects, nor masters from slaves. And it is not right to think that God is more petty-minded than men. Enough then about the fact that gods exist, and ought to receive honor.

79. Augustine, Epistle 102: 16 (to Deogratias, 6 questions against the pagans):

Question III. Let us now look to the question which comes next in order. "They find fault," he says, "with the sacred ceremonies, the sacrificial victims, the burning of incense, and all the other parts of worship in our temples; and yet the same kind of worship had its origin in antiquity with themselves, or from the God whom they worship, for He is represented by them as having been in need of the first-fruits."

80. Eusebius, Preparation for the Gospel V: 1: 9ff:

But with regard to the fact that the evil daemons no longer have any power to prevail since our Saviour's advent among men, the very same author who is the advocate of the daemons in our time, in his compilation against us, bears witness by speaking in the following manner:

[PORPHYRY] 'And now they wonder that for so many years the plague has attacked the city, Asclepius and the other gods being no longer resident among us. For since Jesus began to be honored, no one ever heard of any public assistance from the gods.'

81. Augustine, Epistle 102: 8 (to Deogratias, 6 questions against the pagans):

Question II. Concerning the epoch of the Christian religion, they have advanced, moreover, some other things, which they might call a selection of the more weighty arguments of Porphyry against the Christians: "If Christ," they say, "declares Himself to be the Way of salvation, the Grace and the Truth, and affirms that in Him alone, and only to souls believing in Him, is the way of return to God, what has become of men who lived in the many centuries before Christ came? To pass over the time," he adds, "which preceded the rounding of the kingdom of Latium, let us take the beginning of that power as if it were the beginning of the human race. In Latium itself gods were worshipped before Alba was built; in Alba, also, religious rites and forms of worship in the temples were maintained. Rome itself was for a period of not less duration, even for a long succession of centuries, unacquainted with Christian doctrine. What, then, has become of such an innumerable multitude of souls, who were in no wise blameworthy, seeing that He in whom alone saving faith can be exercised had not yet favoured men with His advent? The whole world, moreover, was not less zealous than Rome itself in the worship practiced in the temples of the gods. Why, then," he asks, "did He who is called the Savior withhold Himself for so many centuries of the world? And let it not be said," he adds, "that provision had been made for the human race by the old Jewish law. It was only after a long time that the Jewish law appeared and flourished within the narrow limits of Syria, and after that, it gradually crept onwards to the coasts of Italy; but this was not earlier than the end of the reign of Caius, or, at the earliest, while he was on the throne.

What, then, became of the souls of men in Rome and Latium who lived before the time of the Caesars, and were destitute of the grace of Christ, because He had not then come?"

82. Jerome, Epistle 133: 9 (To Ctesiph.):

Or lastly make your own the favorite cavil of your associate Porphyry, and ask how God can be described as pitiful and of great mercy when from Adam to Moses and from Moses to the coming of Christ He has suffered all nations to die in ignorance of the Law and of His commandments. For Britain, that province so fertile in despots, the Scottish tribes, and all the barbarians round about as far as the ocean were alike without knowledge of Moses and the prophets. Why should Christ's coming have been delayed to the last times? Why should He not have come before so vast a number had perished?

83. Fragment from Methodius, Against Porphyry:

TBA

84. Another fragment from Methodius, Against Porphyry:

TBA

85. Augustine, Epistle 102: 28: (to Deogratias, 6 questions against the pagans):

Question V. The objector who has brought forward these questions from Porphyry has added this one in the next place: Will you have the goodness to instruct me as to whether Solomon said truly or not that God has no Son?

86. Theophylakt, Enarr. In Joh.: (PG 123, col. 1141)

TBA

87. Macarius, Apocriticus IV: 10:

It is right to examine another matter of a much more reasonable kind (I say this by way of contrast), "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." Christ unravels these things to the multitude about His own coming to earth. If then it was on account of those who are weak, as He Himself says, that He faced sins, were not our forefathers weak, and were not Our ancestors diseased with sin? And if indeed those who are whole need not a physician, and He came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance, so that Paul speaks thus : "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief" (1 Tim. I. 15); if then this is so, and he that has gone astray is called, and he that is diseased is healed, and the unrighteous is called, but the righteous is not, it follows that he who was neither called nor in need of the healing of the Christians would be a righteous man who had not gone astray. For he who has no need of healing is the man who turns away from the word which is among the faithful, and the more he turns away from it, the more righteous and whole he is, and the less he goes astray.

88. Macarius, Apocriticus IV: 19:

He, as though roused from some condition of detachment from the earth, directed against us a saying from Homer, speaking thus with no little laughter: "Rightly did Homer order the manly Greeks to be silent, as they had been trained: he published abroad the wavering sentiment of Hector, addressing the Greeks in measured language, saying, 'Stay, ye Argives; smite not, ye Achaean youths; for Hector of the waving plume is resolved to speak a word.'" Even so we now all sit in quietness here; for the interpreter of the Christian doctrines promises us and surely affirms that he will unravel the dark passages of the Scriptures.

Tell therefore, my good sir, to us who are following what you have to say, what the Apostle means when he says, "But such were some of you" (plainly something base), "but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. vi. 11). For we are surprised and truly perplexed in mind at such things, if a man, when once he is washed from so many defilements and pollutions, shows himself to be pure ; if by wiping off the stains of so much weakness in his life, fornication, adultery, drunkenness, theft, unnatural vice, poisoning, and countless base and disgusting things, and simply by being baptised and calling on the name of Christ, he is quite easily freed from them, and puts off the whole of his guilt just as a snake puts off his old slough. Who is there who would not, on the strength of these, venture on evil deeds, some mentionable and others not, and do such things as are neither to be uttered in speech nor endured in deeds, in the knowledge that he will receive remission from so many criminal actions only by believing and being baptised, and in the hope that he will after this receive pardon from Him who is about to judge the quick and the dead? These things incline the man who hears them to commit sin, and in each particular he is thus taught to practise what is unlawful. These things have the power to set aside the training of the law, and cause righteousness itself to be of no avail against the unrighteous.

They introduce into the world a form of society which is without law, and teach men to have no fear of ungodliness ; when a man sets aside a pile of countless wrongdoings simply by being baptised. Such then is the boastful fiction of the saying.

89. Macarius, Apocriticus IV: 6:

By way of giving plenty of such sayings, let me quote also what was said in the Apocalypse of Peter. He thus introduces the statement that the heaven will be judged together with the earth. "The earth shall present all men to God in the day of judgment, itself too being about to be judged, together with the heaven which contains it." No one is so uneducated or so stupid as not to know that the things which have to do with earth are subject to disturbance, and are not naturally such as to preserve their order, but are uneven; whereas the things in heaven have an order which remains perpetually alike, and always goes on in the same way, and never suffers alteration, nor indeed will it ever do so. For it stands as God's most exact piece of workmanship. Wherefore it is impossible that the things should be undone which are worthy of a better fate, as being fixed by a divine ordinance which cannot be touched.

And why will heaven be judged? Will it some day be shown to have committed some sin, though it preserves the order which from the beginning was approved by God, and abides in sameness always? Unless indeed some one will address the Creator, slanderously asserting that heaven is deserving of judgment, as having allowed the judge to speak any portents against it which are so wondrous and so great.

90a. Macarius, Apocriticus IV: 7:

And it makes this statement again, which is full of impiety, saying : "And all the might of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heaven shall be rolled together as a scroll, and all the stars shall fall as leaves from a vine, and as leaves fall from a fig tree." And another boast is made in portentous falsehood and monstrous quackery : "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away " (Matt. xxiv. 35). For, pray, how could any one say that the words of Jesus would stand, if heaven and earth no longer existed? Moreover, if Christ were to do this and bring heaven down, He would be imitating the most impious of men, even those who destroy their own children. For it is acknowledged by the Son that God is Father of heaven and earth when He says : "Father, Lord of heaven and earth" (Matt. xi. 25). And John the Baptist magnifies heaven and declares that the divine gifts of grace are sent from it, when he says : "A man can do nothing, except it be given him from heaven" (John iii. 27). And the prophets say that neaven is the holy habitation of God, in the words : "look down from thy holy habitation, and bless thy people Israel" (Deut. xxvi. 15).

If heaven, which is so great and of such importance in the witness borne to it, shall pass away, what shall be the seat thereafter of Him who rules over it? And if the element of earth perishes, what shall be the footstool of Him who sits there, for He says: "The heaven is my throne, and the earth is the footstool of my feet." So much for the passing away of heaven and earth.

90b. Nemesius, De Natura hom. 38:

TBA

91. Augustine, Epistle 102: 22: (to Deogratias, 6 questions against the pagans):

Question IV. Let us, in the next place, consider what he has laid down concerning the proportion between sin and punishment when, misrepresenting the gospel, he says: "Christ threatens eternal punishment to those who do not believe in Him;" and yet He says in another place, "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." "Here," he remarks, "is something sufficiently absurd and contradictory; for if He is to award punishment according to measure, and all measure is limited by the end of time, what mean these threats of eternal punishment?

92. Augustine, Epistle 102: 2: (to Deogratias, 6 questions against the pagans):

Question I. Concerning the resurrection. This question perplexes some, and they ask, Which of two kinds of resurrection corresponds to that which is promised to us? Is it that of Christ, or that of Lazarus? They say, "If the former, how can this correspond with the resurrection of those who have been born by ordinary generations, seeing that He was not thus born? If, on the other hand, the resurrection of Lazarus is said to correspond to ours, here also there seems to be a discrepancy, since the resurrection of Lazarus was accomplished in the case of a body not yet dissolved, but the same body in which he was known by the name of Lazarus; whereas ours is to be rescued after many centuries from the mass in which it has ceased to be distinguishable from other things. Again, if our state after the resurrection is one of blessedness, in which the body shall be exempt from every kind of wound, and from the pain of hunger, what is meant by the statement that Christ took food, and showed his wounds after His resurrection? For if He did it to convince the doubting, when the wounds were not real, He racticed on them a deception; whereas, if He showed them what was real, it follows that wounds received by the body shall remain in the state which is to ensue after resurrection.

93. Pseudo-Justin Martyr (possibly Diodorus of Tarsus, or Theodoret of Cyr) Quaestiones XIV and XV Gentilium ad Christianos:

TBA

94. Macarius, Apocriticus IV: 24:

Let us once again discuss the question of the resurrection of the dead. For what is the reason that God should act thus, and upset in this random way the succession of events that has held good until now, whereby He ordained that races should be preserved and not come to an end, though from the beginning He has laid down these laws and framed things thus? The things which have once been determined by God, and preserved through such long ages, ought to be everlasting, and ought not to be condemned by Him who wrought them, and destroyed as if they had been made by some mere man, and arranged as mortal things by one who is himself a mortal. Wherefore it is ridiculous if, when the whole is destroyed, the resurrection shall follow, and if He shall raise---shall we say?---the man who died three years before the resurrection, and along with him Priam and Nestor who died a thousand years before, and others who lived before them from the beginning of the human race. And if any one is prepared to grasp even this, he will find that the question of the resurrection is one full of silliness. For many have often perished in the sea, and their bodies have been consumed by fishes, while many have been eaten by wild beasts and birds. How then is it possible for their bodies to rise up? Come then, and let us put to the test this statement which is so lightly made. Let us take an example. A man was shipwrecked, the mullets devoured his body, next these were caught and eaten by some fishermen, who were killed and devoured by dogs; when the dogs died ravens and vultures feasted on them and entirely consumed them. How then will the body of the shipwrecked man be brought together, seeing that it was absorbed by so many creatures? Again, suppose another body to have been consumed by fire, and another to have come in the end to the worms, how is it possible for it to return to the essence which was there from the beginning?

You will tell me that this is possible with God, but this is not true. For all things are not possible with Him ; He simply cannot bring it about that Homer should not have become a poet, or that Troy should not be taken. Nor indeed can He make twice two, which make the number four, to be reckoned as a hundred, even though this may seem good to Him. Nor can God ever become evil, even though He wishes; nor would He be able to sin, as being good by nature. If then He is unable to sin or to become evil, this does not befall Him through His weakness. In the case of those who have a disposition and fitness for a certain thing, and then are prevented from doing it, it is clear that it is by their weakness that they are prevented. But God is by nature good, and is not prevented from being evil; nevertheless, even though He is not prevented, he cannot become bad.

And pray consider a further point. How unreasonable it is if the Creator shall stand by and see the heaven melting, though no one ever conceived anything more wonderful than its beauty, and the stars falling, and the earth perishing ; and yet He will raise up the rotten and corrupt bodies of men, some of them, it is true, belonging to admirable men, but others without charm or symmetry before they died, and affording a most unpleasant sight. Again, even if He could easily make them rise in a comely form, it would be impossible for the earth to hold all those who had died from the beginning of the world, if they were to rise again.

V. On Christian belief

95. Macarius, Apocriticus III: 17:

Look at a similar saying, which is naturally suggested by it, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, verily I say unto you, ye shall say to this mountain, Be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea, and it shall not be impossible for you."

It is obvious therefore that any one who is unable to remove a mountain in accordance with this bidding, is not worthy to be reckoned one of the family of the faithful. So you are plainly refuted, for not only are the rest of Christians not reckoned among the faithful, but not even are any of your bishops or priests worthy of this saying.

96. Macarius, Apocriticus III: 16:

Again, consider in detail that other passage, where He says, "Such signs shall follow them that believe: they shall lay hands upon sick folk, and they shall recover, and if they drink any deadly drug, it shall in no wise hurt them." So the right thing would be for those selected for the priesthood, and particularly those who lay claim to the episcopate or presidency, to make use of this form of test. The deadly drug should be set before them in order that the man who received no harm from the drinking of it might be given precedence of the rest. And if they are not bold enough to accept this sort of test, they ought to confess that they do not believe in the things Jesus said. For if it is a peculiarity of the faith to overcome the evil of a poison and to remove the pain of a sick man, the believer who does not do these things either has not become a genuine |86 believer, or else, though his belief is genuine, the thing that he believes in is not potent but feeble.

97. Jerome, Comm. in Isaiah. 3: 2:

Let us -- ourselves -- therefore also take care lest we be tax-collectors from the people; lest -- as the impious Porphyry says -- matrons and women be our senate, ruling in the churches and where the favour of women decides the steps [of promotion] of the priesthood.

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